



# Volunteers Make It Happen

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Students learn about plant identification and habitat evaluation.

**V**olunteerism, the policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community.

TWA's Learning Across New Dimensions in Science (L.A.N.D.S.) Intensive has hundreds of volunteers who truly believe in volunteerism. The volunteers who help with the L.A.N.D.S. Intensive programs give countless hours teaching students about issues facing wildlife and land in Texas as well as how to start developing remedies for these problems.

There are hundreds of volunteers who give thousands of hours of their time to promote TWA's goals and L.A.N.D.S. Intensive would not be able to function without them. The volunteers who work with L.A.N.D.S. Intensive are a unique mixture of people who willingly give their time to help educate whatever students get sent their way. The student groups range anywhere from five to 25 in size, and there are five or six groups each day. The Field Investigation Day (FID) stations that they man include topics that range from learning about monitoring water quality to learning about different technologies used to track and study different wildlife species. All of these activities take place on ranches or park areas in order to get the students outside and



TWA Director Sue Price teaches students how people affect rainwater runoff/infiltration with a rainfall simulator.





actually getting hands-on experiences.

Paul Grindstaff and Charlie Grindstaff (Texas Master Naturalists – Cross Timbers Chapter) are excellent examples of the wonderful volunteers who participate in the L.A.N.D.S Intensive program. They travel all over Texas to work at the FIDs. Each time they show up they are enthusiastic about getting to work with a new group of students. In the Fort Worth area, Tina Hendon and Morgan Buob (Tarrant Regional Water District) are at almost every FID with a stream trailer that provides students hands-on opportunities to learn about the causes and effects of erosion.

In addition to individuals, many different organizations work side by side with TWA to accomplish common goals. Texas Master Naturalists, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Tarrant Regional Water District, along with many others provide experts in their regions to instruct and guide students while exposing students to career opportunities.

Two more valuable group of volunteers are landowners and resource managers. Many of the students in the L.A.N.D.S. Intensive program live in urban environments and many have never been to a working ranch. Ranches such as the Dixon Water Foundation's Bear Creek Ranch in Aledo and Leo Ranch in Decatur, and Larry Joe Doherty's Longpoint Ranch in Burton allow hundreds of students, teachers and volunteers to come onto the properties and serve as incredible hosts for FIDs.

Some ranch owners such as Gary and Sue Price of 77 Ranch in Blooming Grove not only host FIDs, but also teach stations as well as serve on various committees with TWA and other organizations. Without these extraordinary locations and people, students would not be able to experience the great outdoors and participate in these incredible programs.



Texas Master Naturalist Paul Grindstaff teaches students how to run water chemistry tests.

Robert Schuller once said “You can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.” Volunteering with TWA programs gives you an opportunity to plant seeds for the future of Texas’ wildlife and land. As a volunteer, you never know what may grow from your seed. 🌱



## TWA WELCOMES EDUCATION CONTRACTOR

Hi, I'm Shelby Bessette and am working as an Education Contractor for TWA. I work in the DFW area and am responsible for Wise, Denton and Collin counties. Unlike many of the other educators who work for TWA, I'm not native to Texas, but I got here as fast as I could. I grew up in rural South Carolina—camping, hiking and hunting. I first studied water quality in rivers and streams and received a bachelor's degree in biology from Winthrop University in 2013. When I was nearing my graduation, I had one goal in mind and it was going to Texas.

Sure enough, a few weeks after graduation, I moved to Fort Worth to work as a naturalist at YMCA Camp Carter. Camp Carter helped connect me to the land, culture and wildlife of Texas. I

spent a summer in Nevada before Texas called me home a second time. However, this time, I was called to a completely new environment.

I studied in Brownsville at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley and completed research on South Padre Island. Specifically, I studied the plants and animals that live in the coastal dunes. Two years in the Rio Grande Valley while working on a masters degree in biology plus volunteer work with Sea Turtle Inc. made me realize that Texas is my forever home.

I'm excited to be working for a non-profit that promotes conservation and land stewardship in Texas. I'm thrilled to call Texas and TWA my home, and I hope to enhance TWA's involvement with coastal wildlife conservation and education.

